

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A wafer processing apparatus including a mini-environment portion having a chamber therein and configured to transfer a wafer between a clean box having an opening configured to be closed by a lid and housing to house the wafer and the chamber, said apparatus comprising:

~~a first opening portion which is formed on a part of a wall of the chamber, comprising the chamber to be in communication for communicating with an outside of the chamber, facing an the wall opposing the opening of the clean box so as to allow which allows loading [[and]] or unloading the wafer between the clean box and the mini-environment portion; and chamber,~~

~~a door that closes, when the transfer of the wafer is not performed, the first opening portion and opens, when the transfer of the wafer is performed,~~

wherein when the wafer transferring operation is performed, the clean box is fixed with a first clearance formed around the entire perimeter of ~~the clean box having said first opening portion, the first clearance being defined by a predetermined constant~~ distance between a coplanar surface extending outside from the opening formed plane of the clean box and [[the]] an outside surface of the part of the wall [[in]] on which the first opening portion is formed.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): A wafer processing apparatus according to claim 1, comprising a door capable of closing said first opening portion when the wafer is not transferred and opening the first opening portion when the wafer is transferred, wherein when the door is positioned to substantially close the just closing said first opening portion, a second clearance through which the chamber and the exterior of the mini-environment

portion are in communication with each other exists is formed between the door and a perimeter of said first opening portion, the second clearance communicating with the first clearance,

wherein an inside of the chamber is capable of communicating with an outside of the chamber through the first and second clearances.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): A wafer processing apparatus according to claim 2, wherein [[the]] said second clearance is in communication capable of communicating with [[the]] said first clearance [[so as]] to form a gas flow path from the chamber to the exterior outside of the mini-environment portion chamber.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): A wafer processing apparatus including a mini-environment portion having a chamber therein and configured to transfer a wafer between a clean box having an opening configured to be closed by a lid and housing to house the wafer and the chamber, said apparatus comprising:

a first opening portion which is formed on a part of a wall of the chamber, for communicating comprising the chamber to be in communication with an outside of the chamber, facing an the wall opposing to the opening of the clean box so as to allow which allows loading [[and]] or unloading the wafer between the clean box and the mini-environment portion chamber; and

a door that closes, when the transfer of the wafer is not performed, the first opening portion and opens, when the transfer of the wafer is performed configured to close said first opening portion when the wafer is not transferred and opening the first opening portion when the wafer is transferred,

wherein when the wafer transferring operation is performed, the clean box is fixed with a first clearance formed at the perimeter of said first opening portion, the first clearance being defined by having a predetermined constant distance between a coplanar surface extending outside from the opening formed plane of the clean box and [[the]] an outside surface of the part of the wall [[in]] on which the first opening portion is formed; and

wherein when the door is positioned to substantially close the just closing said first opening portion, a second clearance in the door through which the chamber and the exterior of the mini-environment portion are in communication with each other exists is formed between the door and a perimeter of said first opening portion, the second clearance communicating with the first clearance,

wherein an inside of the chamber is capable of communicating with an outside of the chamber through the first and second clearances.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): A wafer processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein an opening of the first clearance is directed along extends in a direction different from a direction along which the of a wall on which said first opening portion faces is formed.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): A wafer processing apparatus according to claim 4, wherein an opening of the first clearance is directed along extends in a perpendicular direction different from a direction along which to the first opening portion faces is formed.

Claim 7 (New): A wafer processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein clean box has a tab provided at a periphery of the opening of the clean box, and wherein the surface extending outside from the opening of the clean box is a surface of the tab.

Claim 8 (New): A wafer processing apparatus according to claim 4, wherein clean box has a tab provided at a periphery of the opening of the clean box, and wherein the surface extending outside from the opening of the clean box is a surface of the tab.